

Press release

Rittal GmbH & Co. KG



Rittal's first subsidiary celebrates its fiftieth anniversary

Fifty years of Rittal Sweden: A springboard for international success

“Just do it.” It was with great courage that Rittal – then a small company – ventured abroad in 1971: In the basement of a small Swedish house, the inventor of the volume-produced enclosure founded its first foreign subsidiary. It became the springboard for the company’s worldwide growth from a sheet-metal processor in Germany’s Central Hesse region to an international digital enterprise. On the occasion of Rittal Sweden’s 50th-anniversary celebration, owner Professor Friedhelm Loh and the management and employees in Ängelholm looked back on an extraordinary story and how it will continue.

Herborn, 7. November 2022 – An extraordinary invention for industry, a Swedish market with major competition and the visit to a trade fair by a young and curious electrical engineer: The story of Rittal Sweden shows how this can become a recipe for success in international expansion. The first subsidiary of the then “sheet metal basher” from Central Hesse was the starting point for developing a corporate group that is now globally present and which has made it its mission to drive digitalisation in industry.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the young Swede Lars Johnsson stood at Rittal’s stand at the Hanover Trade Fair and found out about their enclosure – at the time, an idea for the industry that was as simple as it was resounding. A little later, in 1971, he was sitting in his basement as managing director of the first international subsidiary of the Hessian company with the explicit goal of conquering the Swedish market – in the face of all resistance or competition: “We started from scratch, but we quickly won over customers,” Johnsson, who remained CEO of Rittal Sweden until 2013 now recalls. The arguments then and now were reliably high quality, availability from stock, and the 24-hour

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delivery promise – along with the striving to make the customer successful and to develop new and unexpected solutions.

The Swedish experience provided the blueprint for further expansion. Other subsidiaries followed in France, Belgium, Austria and the UK in the 1970s. Rittal founded its largest subsidiary so far in the USA in 1981, followed in 1997 by a subsidiary in China. Today, the Rittal family has expanded to more than 64 companies around the globe and there are now over 90 companies within the Friedhelm Loh Group. This corporate group offers a combination of hardware and software solutions for almost every industry sector, from engineering software and systems technology to IIoT solutions for smart production.

Being close to the customer is the top priority

Proximity to the customer – that has been the decisive point for decades, Mr Johnsson says regarding “Rittal – The System”. In the 2000s, the focus also expanded to cover Denmark, Finland and Norway: “We have always dared to break new ground for the customer. This has opened doors for Rittal,” says Professor Friedhelm Loh, Owner and CEO of the Friedhelm Loh Group, who is celebrating the company’s 50th anniversary with Norbert Müller, Rittal’s long-serving Managing Director and Chairman of the Board of Management, representatives of the current management team and the subsidiary’s employees.

Thus, the celebration in Ängelholm, Sweden, is also a customer event, being held one year after the official anniversary because of the pandemic: “As the first Rittal subsidiary outside Germany, we are delighted that we can continue to shape the future on such strong foundations,” says Fredrik Wåhlstrand, now managing director of Rittal Scandinavia.

The future needs the past

“We are grateful that we have prospects,” concluded Sebastian Seitz, CEO of Eplan and Cideon, Rittal’s sister companies in the software

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sector: “The industry is changing towards maximum efficiency, digitalisation and smart production. These are great opportunities for which we are developing future-proof solutions with our customers.”

And with a whole lot of love, says owner Professor Loh to the subsidiary’s employees: “The love for our customers, our solutions and our companies is what makes us tick. You are part of a global family of over 11,000 employees who stand together in times of growth and challenge. I am looking forward to the future with you.”

And with all the other employees in the group, a few more are celebrating (or recelebrating) their 2021 anniversary this year: Meanwhile Rittal China, Mexico and Brazil are marking their 25th anniversary. Furthermore, the colleagues of Rittal’s first overseas subsidiary in the USA, founded in 1981, are also commemorating their 40th anniversary.

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Captions

Image 1 (fri22212300): Founders among themselves: Professor Friedhelm Loh (left) in conversation with Lars Johnsson, who had been Managing Director of Rittal Sweden until 2013.

Image 2 (fri22212400): An anniversary that unites Rittal generations: Norbert Müller (left), former Rittal Managing Director and CEO, and Fredrik Wählstrand, Managing Director of Rittal Scandinavia.

Image 3 (fri22212500): Norbert Müller (left) and Professor Friedhelm Loh (second from right) meet with Lars Johnsson (second from left) and Sven Bläckberg (right) In 1978, the board of directors of Rittal Scandinavia completed Rittal Sweden’s new building in Ängelholm.

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About Rittal

Rittal, headquartered in Herborn, Germany, is a leading global provider of solutions for industrial enclosures, power distribution, climate control and IT infrastructure, as well as software and services. Systems made by Rittal are deployed in over 90 per cent of all industries across the world, including mechanical and plant engineering, food and beverages, and IT and telecommunications.

The international market leader's product portfolio includes configurable enclosures, with data available across the entire production process. Smart Rittal cooling systems, with up to 75 per cent lower power and a great CO₂ advantage can communicate with the production landscape, enabling predictive maintenance and servicing. The offering also includes innovative IT products, from IT racks and modular data centres, to edge and hyperscale computing solutions.

Leading software providers Eplan and Cideon support the value chain, providing interdisciplinary engineering solutions, while Rittal Automation Systems offers solutions for switchgear. Within Germany, Rittal can supply products on demand within 24 hours – with precision, flexibility and efficiency.

Founded in Herborn in 1961, Rittal is the largest member company in the owner-operated Friedhelm Loh Group. The Friedhelm Loh Group is active worldwide, with 12 production sites and 90 international subsidiaries. It has more than 11,600 employees and posted revenues of 2.5 billion euros in fiscal 2021. In 2022, the family-run business was named one of Germany's leading employers by the Top Employers Institute, for the 14th year running. Within the scope of a Germany-wide survey, Focus Money magazine identified the Friedhelm Loh Group as one of the nation's best providers of vocational training for the fifth time in a row in 2021. In 2022, Rittal was awarded the Top 100 Seal as one of Germany's most innovative medium-sized companies.

For more information, visit www.rittal.com and www.friedhelm-loh-group.com.